2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

They are very rude in their cookery, often burning the flesh in the fire, which they produce by rubbing together two pieces of the wood of the vellan tree (*Pterospermum suberifolium*, Sam.). A hole is scooped in one piece with an arrow-blade, and the other, which is pointed, is inserted into it, and twirled rapidly round between the hands till it ignites.

They are fond of betel, when they can get it; but in lieu of the compound which goes by this name, they have the following substitutes. Instead of the betel leaf, they eat the astringent bark of the demette tree (*Gmelina Asiatica, L.*), or the leaves of an aromatic plant called the madurutala (*Ocimum sanctum*— or *O. canum, L.*) For areka nut, they chew the bark of the moratree (*Nephelium longanum*, Camb.), the oupaloo or wellan connitta tree; and calcined snail shells, or the bark of the areloo tree (*Terminalia chebula*, Retz.), supplies the place of lime or chunam, which forms so important an ingredient in a prepared quid of betel. They do not smoke, and are very temperate, drinking water only.

I need not say that they are very simple and primitive in their habits. The "wilder sort" have had too little communication with the Singhalese to have acquired the vices of civilization. The few necessaries of life which the forest does not supply, such as steel and iron for their arrow-heads and axes, and the very scanty clothing which they wear, they obtain by barter, their wax and honey, elk flesh, and ivory, being eagerly sought after by the neighbouring Singhalese, or "the ubiquitous Moora."

They are very harmless, too; though, according to Knox, were much dreaded once. Even yet there are traditions that they kidnapped children, ran off with young girls, way-laid travellers, and attacked the tavalams or bullock-caravans. But now, at any rate, they are as peaceful as it is possible to be. They are proverbially truthful and honest. They are fond of their children, who early become useful to them; the boys soon are familiar with the use of the bow, while the girls, armed with a pointed stick, add to the family larder at a very tender age, by killing the iguano, and digging for wild yams.

Their constancy to their wives is a very remarkable trait in their character in a country where conjugal fidelity is certainly not classed as the highest of domestic virtues. Infidelity, whether in the husband or the wife, appears to be unknown, and I was

kadura (*strychnos, nux vomica*), the diwi kaduru (*taberna montana dichotoma*, Roxb.), the kolong (*nauclea cordifolia*, Roxb.), the milla (*vitex altissima*, Linn.), the mora (*nephelium longanum*, Camb.), the kaluwera (ebony, *ebenum*, Retz), which they say would stupify them; but though the three first mentioned trees would be injurious, it is probably that the rest would be harmless.

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

3. SOME VEDDA ARTS AND A DANCE

EDIBLE LIME

321 276 [237] THE Vedda method of making from snail-shells an edible lime, the concomitant of a betel or bark chew, is interesting. Four varieties of snail afford it :—The large, white, land snails (*wantako* or *godang bello*) ; the small, black, river snails (*alang bello* or *gadu bello*), found in dry stream beds ; the bivalved *ethal bello* ; and the convoluted *kankuro* or *lanu bello*.

The *wantako* give the best lime. Six to twelve of their shells are dropped into a small fire, and a layer of dry twigs is laid over them. The flame is now vigorously fanned with a leafy sprig, to prevent the shells getting charred. When the overlying layer of twigs is reduced to embers, and the shells glow white, they are gently picked off with a stick, taken on the palm and placed in a large leaf (*kenda* or *kalmilla*). A little water is then added or, in its absence, saliva ! The leaf is quickly folded over the shells which now disintegrate and " ripen." They are then smashed up with the fingers, and the chunam is distributed.

When the small *gadu bello* are used, the process is slightly different : the burnt shells, moistened and bundled in a leaf as before, are replaced on the embers quietened down with a sprinkling of water. The chunam from these is coarser and more gritty than that from the *wantako*.

FIRE MAKING

372 Fire is obtained by jungle folk in a variety of ways. When gun-powder is to hand there is a choice of two methods : (*a*) A little powder is placed on a stone and closely surrounded with small fragments of cloth or tree cotton. It is then ignited, and the rag set on fire, by striking it sharply with an axe-head previously warmed by rubbing on a rock. (*b*) When, in addition to powder, a cap is available, the powder is put into a small square of rag with the upturned cap in its centre. Into the cap the point of a knife is inserted, and the rag is closed over and clapsed firmly against the blade. The striking of this on a stone explodes the cap, ignites the powder, and lights the rag.

These methods being too wasteful for routine use, the commonest mode of fire-making in the jungles is by means of a C-shape iron strike-a-light (*gini-katuwa*) and a piece of chert or crystalline quartz (*irimana gal*), against which is a piece of *kitul* cotton or rag to take the spark when the two are struck together.

The most primitive, and essentially Vedda, art of making fire is by the attrition of two sticks. Although I had hitherto travelled much in Ceylon forests, always making inquiries about this mode of obtaining [184] fire, it was not until I came to Bingoda that I was able to see it done, and that with astonishing ease. In Henebedde and Bintenne the art was dead ; indeed some of the Veddas had never even heard of it !

The light *velang* stick of which arrows are made is the wood *par excellence* for fire making. Elephants being fond of the tree, the dry

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

322 411 is taken, barked, and straightened by being passed rapidly a few times through a flame, and then bent over the knee or between the hands. It is shaved down to uniform thickness with an arecanut-cutter or arrow blade, and cut to suitable length, roughly gauged by holding it along the outstretched arm from the nearer nipple to the end of the middle finger, giving it an average measure of two and a half feet, or slightly less. An arrow belonging to the great bow I have mentioned, measured three and a half feet. The nock or notch is a quarter of an inch deep and cut square.

411 237 284 The arrow is feathered with the wing plumes of the owl, devil-bird, jungle-cock, or large crane (*mana koka*); the owl's, besides being the best, are easily picked up along dry stream beds, on the trees bordering which the birds usually roost. A feather is split unequally down the rachis, only the larger segment being used. Four such segments, about two inches long, are arranged equidistantly round the shaft, an inch and a quarter from the end, and bound neatly down with *aralu* fire, the mouth helping in the process. The first turns are merely taken round that part of the shaft, which is immediately below the feathers, then round the bared lower ends of the rachis, and then carried along, at spaced intervals, between the carefully separated barbs. Should a strand not prove long enough, it is finished off by having its end tucked in between rachis and shaft, and another is similarly begun. Finally the ruffled barbs are straightened out between the thumb and fingers moistened with saliva. A few turns of fibre just below the notch serve to give grip to the drawing fingers.

411 The arrow-head is made of flattened iron obtained from local blacksmiths. It is three to five inches long, of lanceolate shape in imitation of the *na* leaf, and sharp at the edges; serving as much as a cutting implement as an arrow. By a tang it is let into the end of the shaft to which it is firmly secured with fibre. All the strung parts of the arrow, [824] as well as the bow-string, are finally dressed with the sticky milk of *kiri-wel* to prevent untwisting. Both bow and arrow, being very liable to the ravages of boring insects, are always kept hung over the smoke when not in use.

The method of stringing the bow is by placing one end of it, to which the string is knotted, on the ground, and then pressing on its centre either with the bent knee or by a foot thrust. A correctly strung bow should measure at its centre a span between string and belly of bow; this is rather more than the "fist-mele" (clenched fist with thumb upright) the rough estimate of European stringing.

The arrow release favoured by the Veddas is that in which the cord is drawn with the first joints of the index and middle fingers, the arrow being usually placed on the left of the bow. The style of archery is often peculiar: the arrow fitted to the bow is raised head high; the right elbow is now swung up in an awkward flourish above the head, and then brought slowly down to alignment with the eye, as the string is drawn out to its fullest extent and the arrow delivered.

DANCING

177 536 The ceremonial dances of the Veddas have been minutely described and illustrated by Seligmann. The dance we are about to describe seems to have been performed before him in its greatest purity at Henebedde. The differences between his description and ours must be